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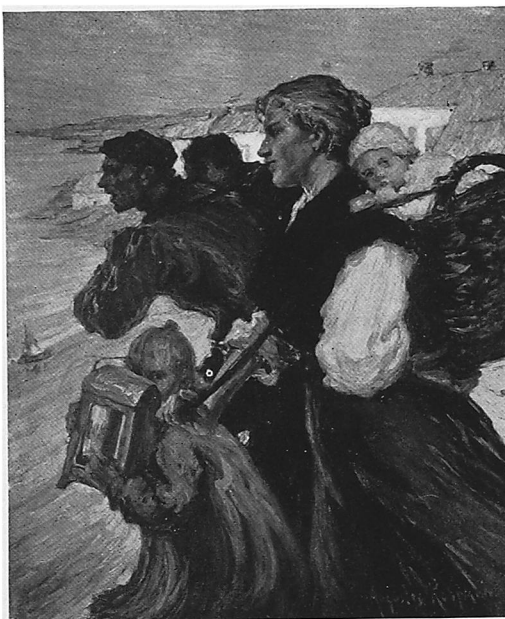
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"GOING  
TO  
THE  
BOATS"

By  
Augustus  
Koopman



Now at  
Carnegie  
Institute,  
Pittsburg

Owned by  
M. Knoedler  
& Co.

## Augustus Koopman—Painter of Emotions

By JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON

IF we are to experience pleasurable sensations by looking at pictures, there are certain things to be considered; the exact truthfulness of painting, with wonderful suggestions of texture and form, but, above all the emotions awakened by colors put in for their own sake; realism in other words. But the excitement growing out of movement or the soothing effects of tranquility are still more important and difficult to paint. Few and simple lines and forms, or a multitude of incidents, have each an emotional effect. The personality of the painter as revealed in the evident sym-

thy with his nature, as he sees it, becomes most interesting of all. Koopman has marked individuality seen in his large man-



ON THE ROCKS AFTER THE STORM

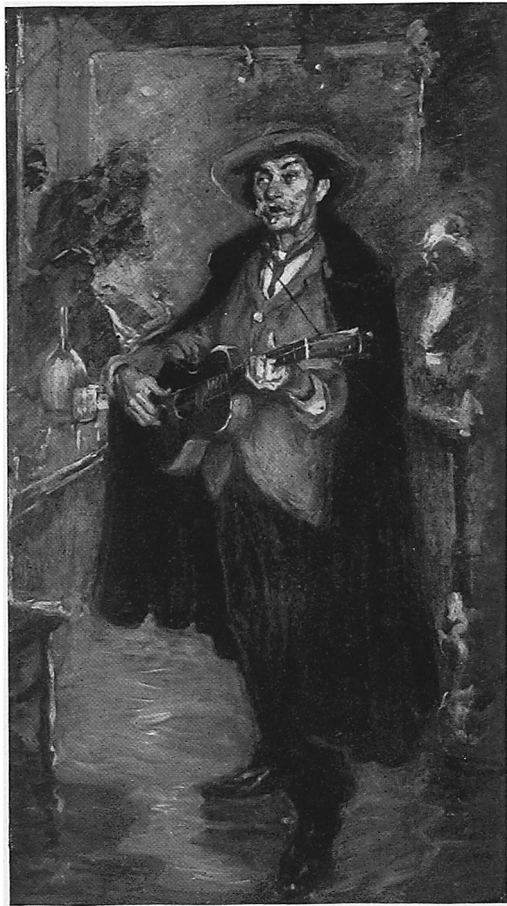
By Augustus Koopman —Collection Isaac Delgado Museum of Art



*THE CRYSTAL GAZERS*  
*By Augustus Koopman*

ner of laying paint, which has its effect on his drawing, but especially on his color. All, or nearly all, his pictures are of the sea when it is waked up, the waters to be reckoned with seriously; not always in storm but showing that mighty unrest which follows storm, that ponderous heaving which tells of its weight and force when once disturbed. I can recall no other man who has so well seen and painted the moods of heaving sea, gusty weather, rising wind or lively commotion. Because of these studies he excites our emotions but, more than that, he has colors which distinctly awaken our admiration and move our feelings.

There are many artists who have drawn individual waves superbly, as Waugh, whose waves plunge on the rocks with exact movement, but any wave thus drawn may awaken our admiration but does not excite emotion, beside being as hard as glass and very much like it in texture. Koopman's waves are not entirely individ-



*THE OLD TROUBADOUR*

*By Augustus Koopman*

—Collection Philadelphia Art Club



*THE WINDY DAY (ELLEN)*

*By Augustus Koopman*

ual, but the feeling of turbulent water is wonderfully expressed and is emotional: so much so that the whole harbor shore line, sky, rocks, sands and people all seem moved by the same impulse, each sharing the excitement of the other. Koopman's color and brushing, wonderfully supplement the story of sea happenings. The dashing of the sea is expressed by the dashing of paint and, as all the picture is movement, the brushing is in keeping with it, not carefully drawn waves, but widely disturbed water and the sky and land and people in sympathy with them.

In "The Pushing Off the Boat," owned by The Brooklyn Institute of Art, we are



*PUSHING OFF THE BOAT* —Collection Brooklyn Institute of Art  
By Augustus Koopman

standing on the edge of a small cove, where there is but slight protection by low head lands, so that the sea has full access and is therefore violent. A heavy fishing boat just pushed off from the shore is tossed in the surf, while the crew exert all their strength to keep from being thrown back again. The men are straining at the push poles, while their wives stand at the water's edge, their clothing wrung by the violent wind. The boat will have better weather as soon as coming to deep water, and with a sail on the mast; but this is a trying moment. The manner of handling suggests the wildness of the water, the sky and the trying situation of the women. Over this excited scene a mass of wild clouds reaches over the headland, promising dirty weather. The brushwork is as rude as the sea and wind and adds to the utter abandon in the subject. This manner of painting avoids the sharpness and hardness of form which are so materialistic;

which have great truth but no sentiment.

Akin to this picture we have "Procession by the Sea," from the collection of Horace Sears, Esq., of Weston, Massachusetts. Because of the dark sky the slope of a shadowed sand dune appears rather deep in tone which gives brilliancy to the water. A multitude of people in procession force their way down the slope. In front of this crowd marches a priest in his white garment, struggling with the violent wind, and close behind strides a banner bearer, his flag capering in the air in a most ill-mannered way.

Beyond this darkened hillock the glistening water of the disturbed sea makes vigorous contrast, the more so as there comes a ominous storm cloud over the headland which promises to bring a violent rush of rain. This cloud reveals its character in a most suggestive way; rising and flowing, and is made with brush strokes in sympathy with its wildness. Were it more



*HORSES RUNNING TO MEET BOAT*  
By Augustus Koopman

—Collection St. Paul Art Institute



*A DRAMATIC MOMENT*  
By Augustus Koopman

carefully done its life would be extinct. The slash of the brush keeps before us the ugliness of the sea-coast weather.

Koopman's color is brilliant. In this grave picture is no glowing sunset, no display of heavenly pyrotechnics; only a gray day by the sea in bad weather. But the gray color is not that which has been carefully mixed on the palette before application to the canvass, which is always dull instead of full of living color like this. Catching up a mass of paint as with a shovel, it is laid right where it belongs and with it goes touches of an opposite color to enrich it. Now to appreciate Koopman's painting we must consider for a moment the technical side of it. Many people suggest to

me that the public does not care anything about the "how it is done," but half the battle here depends upon the manner of using the material.

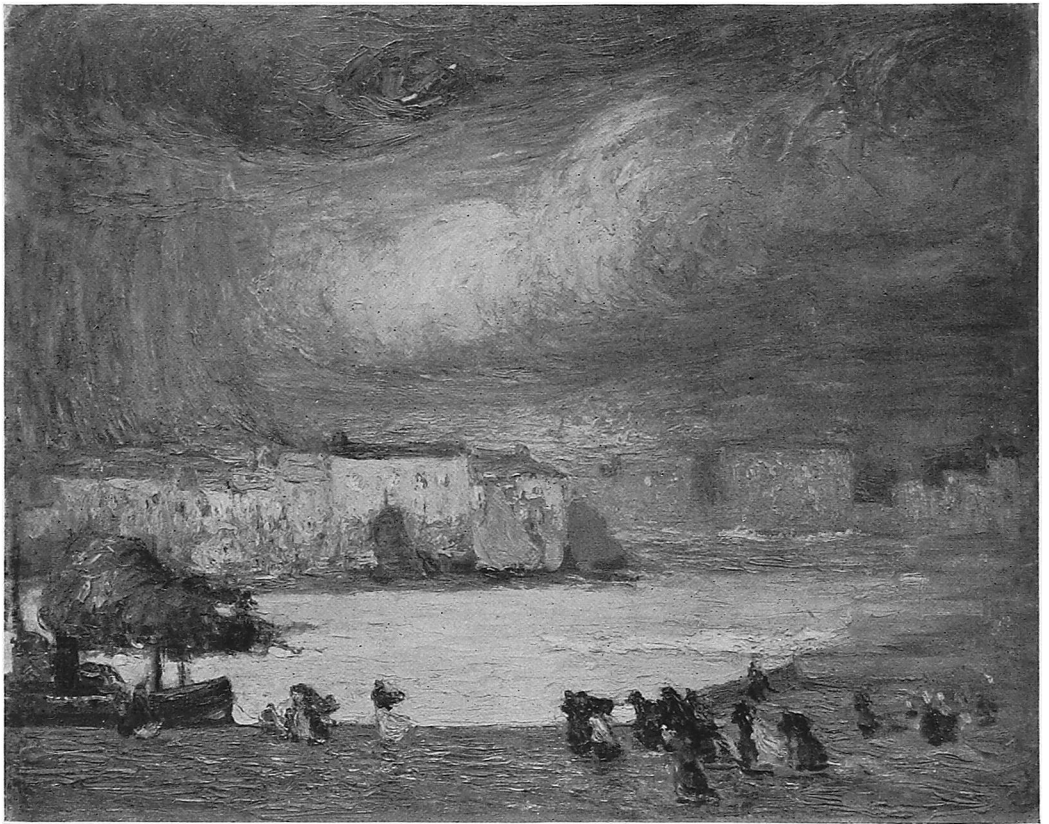
So, here is the science of the thing; supposing that the heavy stroke of paint might be white. Now all colors are either warm or cold. If the white is cold the artist can touch sundry pale notes or warm color not blending it with the white but left distinct. The eye will blend them. If this pale spot is to be on the light side of the cloud of course its un-

derside must be touched into with a violet or dull red just enough to have it look gray at a little distance but still sprightly in tone. Supposing the dark figure with the thrashing banner might be wearing black clothes;



*HAULING UP THE BOAT*  
By Augustus Koopman





*THE DISASTER AT SEA*  
*By Augustus Koopman*

on examination we find the black clothes dotted over with warm notes to enliven it. If the reader has followed this little statement he will see that it suggests the method of Claude Monet, the impressionist. Certainly it does, but with a serious difference. Koopman does not work with spotting but with variations, and the color of long brush strokes, each one making drawing.

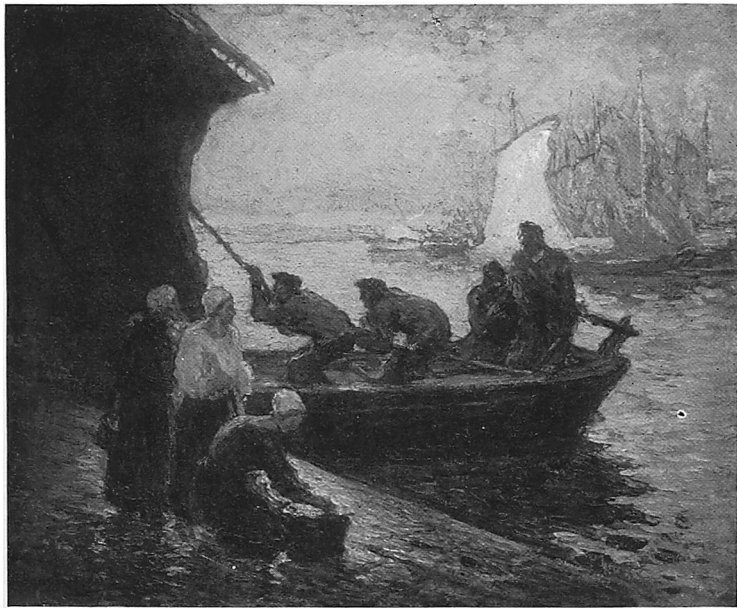
In looking at the picture, the story of storm and strife is distinctly interesting, but if we can add to this story an analysis of his color the work becomes far more interesting. The brilliancy of color of these pictures is very striking, but when we add the wild handling everything becomes much more convincing. Also we have to consider the strong contrasts of light and shade and of colors. We do not mean to

state that these colors are like that in a woman's dress, one part of which is green and another part red, because the green and red are so tickled into the grays that we have brilliancy and richness but no crudeness.

Mr. Koopman draws spirited figures, some of them on large canvasses and full life-sized. His splendid presentation of "Horses Running to Meet Boat," in the St. Paul Art Institute, has never been outdone for fine action. Although there are no details, the man and his mount swing into subtle movement, carrying our attention directly to the center of interest; to the arriving boat. These fishing boats, built of the heaviest timber are driven through the surf until halted by contact with the wide reaching flat sands. In the meantime these

horses are hitched to the boat and the ponderous affair is drawn up on dry land. The incident is full of activity and spirited movement, and the dashing way in which it is painted, or sketched, is much more agreeable than were it done with minute care.

There is a breeziness in the picture, "Going to the Boats," which was included in the Roman Exposition of 1911, not alone in the atmospheric conditions, but in the spirit of the movements. These figures are hurrying to their work with energy. They are large figures and every detail of their fine faces is faithfully rendered. We have here the old story of an attractive young mother carrying her chubby babe in a fish basket, her older son proudly carrying the binnacle



HOISTING SAILS, SUNSET  
By Augustus Koopman

lamp, and vigorous men interested in reaching their destination. Though not as intense as some of the others, the work is vivacious and moving to the spirits.

A portrait of Ellen, called "The Windy Day," serves a double purpose, giving a likeness of a pleasing girl, and the wind tossing about her clothing. All Mr. Koopman's flesh painting is excellent and his facial expressions all you could possibly demand.

An effective arrangement of lines and agreeable colors are sufficient for the making of a picture. No matter what the subject matter may be, it is simply necessary that the lines and colors be agreeable, whether the forms are of clouds or waves, or trees and



THE ARRIVING BOAT  
By Augustus Koopman



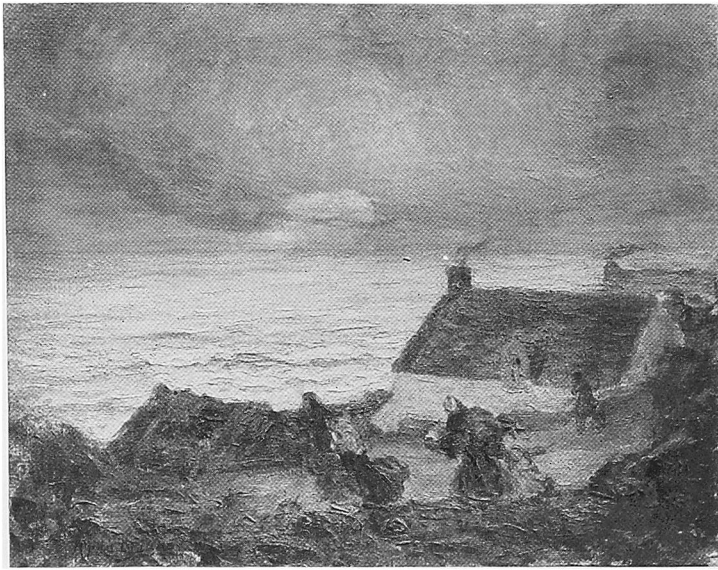


*A WINDY DAY*  
By Augustus Koopman

meadows. Certainly, if we add to these dramatic movements, the pictures will be more striking. And we approach high art when to these are added the study of some mood of nature, some peculiar feeling of atmosphere. In the picture "On the Beach," what look to be bags of wind are driven across the sky, the sea is whipped to whitecaps, and in sympathy with all this activity, the crowd in lively movement echoes the same sentiment. It is sometimes cold in such a fresh wind, but we are reassured by the presence of bathers, who seem to be enjoying themselves this beautiful morning. Contrasting with this picture comes a dramatic moment with a sufficiently lively sea, not violent, but quite movemented enough to cause anxiety, because the fishing boats shorten sail just before touching the shallows.

Here the artist stood on the height where he could see a wide reach of water, and

has made us feel the height and distance. The sense of spacious outdoors makes us draw a long breath. Beside a stone cottage near at hand a crowd has gathered to watch the little group down on the beach waiting to aid the landing. When this boat touches the shallows she is hauled to dry land, and we have then the picture called "Hauling up the Boat," which is the sequel to the previous scene. These fishing boats are built so solid that beaching them in the surf is quite safe and normal. The boats do not draw much water, so that the crew can jump overboard and bring a line ashore. Then the entire company of villagers, old and young, runs down to haul the rope, and those who cannot find a place in the line crowd against the side of the boat and push. It is an exciting scene, all the crowd with shoulders against the planking cheer and strain. It may be that the village will be rich enough to own horses to drag the craft



*THE WINDSTORM*  
By Augustus Koopman

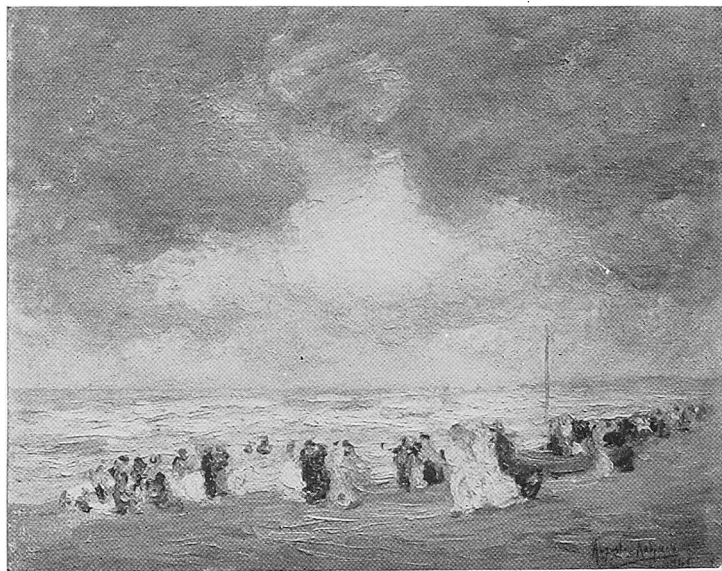
ashore, but time and again in a small village the inhabitants are too poor to own horses and the people don't seem to mind getting wet in order to do the pulling themselves.

"The Wind Storm" and "A Windy Day" continue this series of shore effects. In one the atmosphere is dark and foreboding; in the other gay and cheerful. In the dark picture the women, rushing from their cottages, seem to have cause for anxiety and brace themselves against the storm, to discover the difficulty. The contrast of these two pictures reveals the character of Koopman who is keenly alive to the phenomena of Nature and his brushing of paint is in sympathy with the weather. "The Disaster at Sea" has the same

characteristics, cottages bordering a harbor and everything engulfed in a raging sky with rain and wind. The swirls of the brush which suggest the great rolling mass in the sky express much character. Nobody carries an umbrella, as none are owned in the place. There is an awful threat in that sky and the color suggests ghastliness.

Beside these excited moments we have something peaceful in the "Return of the Shrimpers," quiet, happy people going home from

toil. These trudge along carrying their nets and they are in a jocose mood, slyly passing an amusing word. The expression of the faces is well found, as the figures are life size, and even the odd twist in the old man's mouth explains perfectly the



*ON THE BEACH*  
By Augustus Koopman

amusement of this hard-featured son of the sea. This contentment is a relief from the anxious scenes already described. The handling is free and spirited, but the expression has been carried to completeness. The sunburned faces are rich in color, but normal, the color working rather gray against the ruddy sky of evening which harmonizes with the soiled red jacket. At the recent St. Louis World's Fair, the Committee of Awards bestowed upon it a medal and, later, the picture was specially invited to the Venice International, in 1910.

Another picture with large finished figures is "The Crystal Gazers." A young woman and a half-grown girl sit by a table studying the mysteries in the heart of a huge, white glass bottle; perhaps reading therein their fortune; or, maybe, pleased by the reflection of the sunlit window and the sunny landscape. The picture is well managed, a white dress and one of pale blue being correctly placed against the brilliant window. Of course the faces are complete in detail and sufficiently finished, glowing in color as well as fortunately lighted; speaking well of the color genius of the artist.

Contrasting with these much finished works, is "Golden Moments," a young mother and half-grown girl sitting on the seashore rocks while a young brother digs sand with his bare hands. Here again the artist has luminous color and many varieties of it. All of them are happy, and the sheltered nook where they play protects them from all rude winds. The handling here unlike the last several pictures, is as bold and rude as the windy sea. Of course this rude handling preserves the clearness of the color and the glow of the picture. There are more seaside pictures with people attending their boats when the weather is calm. There is great originality in the compositions and in the coloring. It is not enough to state that the colors are red or blue or green, but the color is found half-concealed in the rich tone.

"Hoisting Sail—Sunset" becomes rich because of the sunset notes lingering in the sky and on the sails, the principal canvas being a dark red brown. The men are pulling hard at the halyards and they are dark against the brilliant light of the other sails beyond. Another picture, not unlike the last, has an odd motive, but one many times seen in European ports. We are beside a high stone dock with stone steps, left visible by the receding of those mighty tides along the shore. Of course this is opportunity for the use of rich color on the moss grown stones, as well as the picturesque forms. On top of this wall is a curious crowd watching operations, and out in the harbor sails of many colors catch the light. Of course, you add to this the variegated clothes worn by the multitude. The near boat has a deep rich red sail, as the fashion is to paint the canvas, may be for preservation, maybe for love of gaiety.

It is becoming more and more common for painters to turn aside for the moment to practice the fascinating art of etching. Mr. Koopman exhibits a dozen or more charming etchings. Any artist, who knows his profession, may interest himself in etching as he would in pen drawing or any other sort of sketching, and the probability is that he will quickly learn the technical peculiarities of this special art.

Rarely do we meet an artist who unites so many good qualities, who expresses in one picture color, movement, weather and human nature.

"We can guarantee that these pictures are not commonplace and that each visitor, according to his lights, would be given a shock of emotion at sight of the revel in rich pigments. However little you may 'love art' you still will find much to entertain you from the very oddity of its technique. Many will yell and declare the man has gone paint mad, but nevertheless, when they leave that picture gallery, will in spite of themselves bear away new lights on painting, and will wonder why it is that

other admired pictures now seem flat and humdrum after this riot of color."

These were on exhibition at Moulton & Ricketts Galleries, but a part of them are now hanging in The Art Institute, of Chicago, and another part has gone to The Hackley Art Gallery, Muskegon, Michigan.

Augustus Koopman was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1869. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He is also a pupil of Bouguereau and Robert-Fleury. Among the awards he has received are the second Wanamaker Prize, American Art Association of Paris, 1898; first Clark Prize, American Art Association of Paris, 1899; bronze medal and

special silver medal for decoration, Paris Exposition, 1900; bronze medals, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901, and Universal Exposition, St. Louis, 1904; silver medal, Appalachian Exposition, 1911. Elected Associate Member Nationale Beaux Arts, 1912.

Mr. Koopman is represented in the Luxembourg Gallery (Etchings), Paris; Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans; City Art Museum, St. Louis; Museum of Fine Arts, Detroit; Brooklyn Institute; Philadelphia Art Club; the print departments of the Congressional Library, and the New York Public Library, and in many foreign and American collections. He is a member of numerous societies.



*GOLDEN MOMENTS*  
*By Augustus Koopman*